

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
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R 100747Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3740
INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 1705

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT CH
SUBJ: PRC ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION COMING TO HONG KONG

REF: HONG KONG 1658

1. IN A LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN OFFICERS AT THE
CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE (REFTEL), TA KUG PAO PUBLISHER
FEI I-MIN ON FEB 8 STATED THAT HE "RECENTLY" HAD BEEN
TASKED BY PEKING WITH HANDLING TWO PROJECTS. THE FIRST,
ARRANGING A MAJOR SPEAKING FORUM FOR DR. HAN SUYIN AFTER HE
RECENT TRIP TO CHINA HAS ALREADY BE COMPLETED. IT WILL
BE HELD ON FEB 14 IN THE CITY HALL CONCERT AUDITORIUM.
HOWEVER, FEI SAID HE EXPECTED A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY IN
ARRANGING THE SECOND, EXHIBITING PEKING'S ARCHEOLOGICAL
TREASURES IN HONG KONG.

2. FEI STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED HIS CHOICE OF THE
200-PIECE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBIT NOW IN AUSTRALIA OR THE
100-PIECE EXHIBIT IN THE HILIPPINES, OR EVEN THE POS-
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SIBILITY OF MAKING HIS OWN SELECTION FROM AMONG THE PIECES
CURRENTLY IN THE TWO COLLECTIONS. HE STATED THAT HE HAD
ALSO PERSONALLY REQUESTED THE INCLUSION OF ONE OF THE LIEF-
SIZE POTTERY HORSES EXCAVATED LAST YEAR FROM CHIN SHIH HUANG'S
TOMB NEAR SIAN. FEI APPARENTLY HELD CONVERSATIONS TO WORK
OUT THE MODALITIES OF THE EXHIBIT WITH PEKING'S CULTURAL
RELICS ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU CHIEF, WANG YEH-CHIU, WHEN HE

TRANSITED HONG KONG ENROUTE TO AUSTRALIA IN MID-JANUARY.

3. FEI COMMENTED THAT HE HAD ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF OFFICIALS AND UNIVERSITIES HERE CONCERNING THE EXHIBIT AND ALL HAD APPLAUDED THE IDEA. URBAN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN A. DE O. SALES HAS APPARENTLY OFFERED FEI THREE FLOORS OF THE CITY HALL HIGH BLOCK, ONE ROOM IN THE CITY HALL. LOW BLOCK AND ONE FLOOR OF EXHIBIT SPACE IN STAR HOUSE IN KOWLOON, A TOTAL OF SOME 27,000 SQUARE FEET. BUT FEI REMARKED THAT THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMISES MEANT NOTHING SINCE IT WAS "THE POLICE" WHO REALLY CONTROLLED THE APPROVAL PROCESS. FEI NOTED THAT IN THE CASE OF SETTING UP THE HAN SUYIN LECTURE HE HAD PAID FOR THE CONCERT HALL AND HAD MADE ALL THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE ARTS FESTIVAL COMMITTEE WHICH IS USING THE HALL CURRENTLY BUT THAT THE POLICE HAD EVEN THEN HELD UP THE FINAL APPROVAL UNTIL ABOUT "FIVE DAYS AGO". FEI REMARKED THAT THE EXHIBIT'S CHIEF PROBLEM CAME OVER THE GUARANTEE OF THE ARTIFACTS SECURITY. INSURANCE COSTS APPEAR TO BE PROHIBITIVE FOR HONG KONG AND, WHILE FEI HAS HAD ENCOURAGEMENT FROM LOCAL SOURCES ABOUT THE STAGING OF THE EXHIBIT, APPARENTLY NO ONE HAS COME UP WITH AN IDEA OF HOW TO GUARANTEE THE PROTECTION OF THE ITEMS. FEI NOTED THAT BASED ON THE AUSTRALIAN EXHIBIT GUARANTEES OF FOUR HUNDRED MILLION AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS (SIC), THE INSURANCE GUARANTEE WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY TWO BILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS. WE SUSPECT THE AUSTRALIAN FIGURE IS MORE LIKELY FORTY MILLION-- THE EXHIBIT IN THE U.S. WAS VALUED AT ABOUT FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS OR TWO HUNDRED MILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS.

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4. FEI STATED THAT THE EXHIBITION IS PLANNED TO RUN FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS AND WOULD START THIS SUMMER IN EITHER JULY OR AUGUST. SHIPPING COSTS FOR HK OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE MINIMAL, AND PEKING HAS BEEN LIBERAL IN OTHER DEMANDS. FEI HAS SAID THAT ONLY OFFICIAL PRC PHOTOGRAPHS WOULD BE PERMITTED FOR THE EXHIBIT CATALOG WITH PEKING TAKING AN EIGHT PER CENT CUT ON THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THE CATALOGS. DESPITE HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF THE UNDERTAKING, FEI SEEMED GENUINELY HONORED AT PEKING'S ASKING HIM TO ARRANGE THE EXHIBIT AND QUITE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF BRINGING THE SHOW TO HONG KONG.

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